

Weird

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Summary: Hiccup was always a little strange. Series of pre-movie drabbles about growing up and the strange Haddock heir. Requests accepted, rating may change.

Weird

Trap

Astrid stomps out of her house into the early afternoon sun, pigtailed braids bouncing on her shoulders like flapping hands demonstrating her ire. She huffs and adjusts her grip on her toy wooden axe, kicking a pebble out of the middle of the dirt path and trotting down towards the center of the village.

Her rope is \_gone\_.

She left it by the foot of her bed that morning, and her brothers have been gone fishing with her father for a week, so it's not one of them pranking her. Her mother would have just asked to use it, instead of stealing it away without a trace.

It was brand new too, soft and strong, and she spent two months doing chores to save up enough silver to buy it from Trader Johann when he came through Berk. Black dyed wool, treated against moisture with slick oil and then roughed up so that it'd grip anything she tied it too. She spent the last week with it, running through the woods, climbing trees higher than ever before and practicing her axe with her brother.

He's three summers older than her, and getting his first real axe soon, right before he gets to go to dragon training, and her days of a practice partner are numbered for the moment. No one goes back to wood once they get a real weapon.

She knows that she could practice with the Thorston twins, or

Snotlout Jorgenson, but they're so loud and childish. They're not little kids anymore, and those three spend most of their time goofing off, which is normally harmless if a bit useless.

But today, they might have crossed that line.

She heard them this morning in the mead hall, talking about lying traps in the woods for rabbits, and that same day, her rope goes missing?

The twins are thieves too, never anything of value, mostly victims in their constant pursuit of chaos. They steel shoes off of yaks and doorknobs right out of people's doors. Ropes off of people's bedframes.

She freshens her scowl, childhood plump lip jutting out over her chin as darkly as she can manage as she sashays up to the group of three kids sitting on a boulder in front of the mead hall, cackling about something or other. Snotlout grins and sneers at her approach and she crosses her arms, gripping her axe and readying herself for today's half-witted quip about how girls can't do anything.

"Hey Astrid, nice axe," he compliments the wooden weapon and she scowls at the tiny dagger on his belt. She swears his ego grew three sizes when his dad gave him a real knife before any of the other kids around their age. It was sort of impressive when they were seven, but now it just seems ludicrous.

"You two took my rope," she points to the twins with her free hand, cocking her hips to the other side and raising her eyebrows at them. "I know it was you."

"How do you know?" Tuffnut asks, cocking his head to the side as his too big helmet flops sideways over a jug ear.

"Yeah, there's no way you could tell it was us!" Ruffnut half stands, snarling at her brother who somehow ended up sitting on her braid. He sits harder on the matted hair and she punches him in the face with a laugh. Astrid steps forward while the girl is distracted by her flailing brother and smacks her on the arm with the flat of that polished wooden axe. "Hey!"

"Where is my rope?"

"How did you know it was us?" Tuffnut asks from the ground, ruining his own element of surprise as he lunges at his sister from behind, taking her legs out from under her and trying to keep her down as she knees him in the shoulder and squirms in his grip.

"Because you admitted it as soon as I asked," Astrid scoffs, feeling smart and whacking Tuffnut on the helmet with her axe victoriously. "Just tell me where it is."

"We used it for ropey things," Ruffnut laughs, staring up at the sky as she clamps her brother's head between her knees and squeezes hard enough to make him yelp.

"What ropey things?" Astrid growls, exasperated, and Snotlout stands with a gallant shrug of his shoulders.

"I'll handle thisâ€" "

"I can handle it," she snarls, "I just want to know where my rope is. It was the black one, the nice black one."

"Ooh, that rope was nice," Tuffnut looks dreamily into the distance as his sister drives a savage knee into his spine.

"Where is it?" Astrid repeats, feeling a little at a loss because her normal tactic of twisting an arm behind the back is sort of moot when Ruffnut is already doing such a good job.

"All the traps are out towards Mildew's place," Tuff snickers, a little disappointed as his sister stands and he follows, not bothering to dust the dirt off of his shirt. "We were going to release all the rabbits into his cabbage patch."

Astrid knows it's not worth pointing out that the rabbits would already know about the cabbage patch.

"Didn't anyone ever tell you guys not to steal?" She ignores the way that Snotlout mirrors her position and stares the twins down beside her.

"Not today," Ruffnut scratches her head and looks at her brother, who nods in agreement.

"Well, it's always a rule. Someone shouldn't have to remind you every day," Astrid chastises them, but the sentiment practically bounces off in front of her eyes. "It better be ok, or you guys are going to hear about it from me." She threatens, brandishing that wooden axe so confidently that even Snotlout shrinks back an inch, before sulking off towards Mildew's place, tucking her toy's handle in her belt and crossing her arms for warmth once she breaches the cool forest shadows.

It's not a long walk, and she can see Mildew's cottage perched on a deservedly lonely cliff by the time she comes across the first sloppy trap. The length of rope that once made up the loop lies abandoned on the ground and she steps up to examine what's still hanging from the tree.

Where she expected frayed edges, a neat cut slices across the strands of the almost new rope and she kneels down, frowning at some indentations in the dirt around the base of the trunk. Not big enough or sharp enough to be a dragon, but too big to be any sort of small game. The scuffed dirt around the vague depressions indicate furry feet, and she wonders if somehow a bear showed up on the island, before dismissing the idea as impossible.

They'd notice a bear this close to Berk, and the twins aren't quite that talented.

She contemplates climbing up and retrieving this probably stolen rope before deciding against it, opting out of involving herself further with this ridiculous scheme. A rustle in the trees in front of her catches her attention and her hand falls to the handle of her axe, as if it would do anything in a real fight, and she sneaks forward, fur boots almost silent in the undergrowth. As she gets closer to the sheltered copse, a strange noise makes itself apparent, mumbling and

quiet, and she again wonders about a bear.

What do bears sound like when they're not angry? What if it's a dragon that hasn't sensed her yet?

She steels herself, exhaling carefully and trying to dispel those cowardly thoughts. The sound gets clearer the closer she gets, suddenly easily identifiable as a voice she can't quite place.

"S'Alright, huh buddy? We'll get you right down fromâ€"Oh oh oh, hold still little guyâ€|right thereâ€|" She frowns at the odd diatribe, curious more than afraid as she pushes through the last barrier of trees and finds herself staring at Hiccup Haddock's back as he fiddles at a knot with worried clenched fingers. A good sized rabbit is balanced in the crook of his skinny elbow, trembling but not squirming as he tries to release its back foot from a loop of stolen rope.

"Hiccup?" Astrid asks and he jumps, turning to face her with his tongue still sticking out of the corner of his mouth in concentration. "What are you doing?"

"Ermâ€|he flushes, for some reason holding the rabbit a little closer to his chest and stilling it's squirming with a careful hand on his plump flank. "The twins set a bunch of rabbit traps through here."

"Yeah, they stole some rope of mine," she crosses her arms, only now taking her hand off of the axe handle.

"Oh no, did I cut it?" He asks, looking over his shoulder at the dismantled trap hanging from this tree.

"No," she shakes her head, watching curiously as his thumb carefully strokes over the scared rabbit's leg, trembling from the tight rope around its tiny ankle. "At least I don't think so. I found the other trap over there," she gestures back over her shoulder and he smiles.

"Oh, good, that's the only other one I've done so far," he reaches up with his free hand and starts tugging at the knot again.

"What are you trying to do?"

"I'm trying to get this untied," he steps forward, showing her the knot and shushing the scared rabbit gently, stroking its side. "It's ok," he mumbles, edging close enough for her to see the knot. She carefully reaches out and holds the soft little foot, frowning at the rope until it starts to make sense in her mind.

"Oh, that's one of the fishing knots that my dad uses," she says brightly, shuffling forward and bringing her other hand up to pull at the rope. "You did quite the job of tightening it up though."

"Sorry," he frowns, leaning over her head and watching her quick callused fingers tug at the knot.

"It's alrightâ€|" she concentrates, leaning a little closer with a

frown. "Can I use your knife?"

"Huh?"

"I can wiggle it right in here," she pulls back a bit of rope and the rabbit squirms. "Hand it over."

"Ummâ€|alright," he carefully reaches into his belt and pulls out his knife, handing it to her carefully by the hilt. She grips it and looks at him curiously.

"This is nice."

"I made it," he says proudly, but it doesn't feel like bragging and she frowns, turning back to the knot and wiggling the sharp blade carefully into the space and prying until it comes loose with a sudden tug. Hiccup reaches down and unties the loose rope the rest of the way, dropping it onto the ground and examining the rabbit's foot with careful fingers.

"Here you go," she offers him his knife and steps back, ready for the blood. He tucks the blade back into the holster on his belt and turns over the rabbit in his hands before crouching down to let it go.

"Wait, aren't you going to butcher it?"

"No," he lets it go quickly after that, watching it run into the undergrowth before turning to her with an unmistakably scandalized look in his eyes. "Why would I do that?"

"To take it home and eat it," she nudges him in the right direction and he shrugs.

"I have plenty of food."

"Someone else in the village might need it."

"I haven't heard about anyone," he frowns, brushing some fine rabbit fur off of his too big vest. "Ummâ€|what does your rope look like?"

"My rope?" She asks before her grave mission comes back to her and she nods seriously. "Right, my rope. It's black, and waterproof. It's nice."

"I'll try not to cut it too much," he offers with a slight grin.

"No! Don't cut it."

"I'll try to untie it, but no promises," he offers, turning and heading along a line of trees. She stares a moment before trotting to catch up with him.

"I'll untie it," she strides alongside him, wooden axe-blade tapping at the back of her thigh as she cuts through a patch of denser ferns along the floor. "It'll be quicker anyway."

"Alright," he smiles, seemingly glad for the company, eyes trained to the trees above their head. "Oh, over there," he points to a black vertical line, suddenly stark and obvious against the green and she

follows after him, perching on the roots of the tree as she watches him carefully scoop up a feebly squirming rabbit into his arms and step towards her. "Ok little guy," he mumbles, offering the knot to Astrid along with the hilt of his knife. She steps up and takes it, peering at the ropeâ€"her ropeâ€"from a couple of angles before sliding the knife carefully into the snarled rope and wiggling it loose.

"Right thereâ€!" she grunts as it breaks loose, handing his knife back and sliding her rope off of the rabbit's foot downright possessively. "Here," she hands the knife back, reaching up for the lowest bough and pulling herself onto it to lean up and yank the knots attaching the other edge of the rope to the tree. She can't help but glance towards Hiccup, who's gently stroking the rabbit's head as it writhes, restless and coming back to life. He sets it on the ground with careful hands and watches it scamper back into the woods and out of view. "Are you going to check for more traps?"

"There can't be too many more," he shrugs as she climbs down from the tree, coiling her retrieved rope back around her shoulder and looking back towards the village. "And now that I can untie the knots instead of hack through them, it should go faster."

"You learned how to untie it?" She asks, trying to remember if she instructed him in any particular way. He shrugs and pats his knife.

"Didn't look too hard."

"And you aren't going to keep any of the rabbits to eat?" She double checks, still doubtful and inappropriately curious.

"Not hungry," he shrugs, waving at her as he walks backwards, almost tripping on a half-hidden tree root before spinning and continuing slowly through the trees.

"Hiccup?" He turns back briefly. "You're weird."

"Thanks for that," he scoffs, and she waves with a slight smile.

"See you around," they part ways and she heads back towards the village alone.

\*\*I'm hoping to expand this into a series of pre-movie drabbles if there's interest. Suggestions are welcome, as are reviews.

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\*\*Thank you for reading! \*\*

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file.